

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 OC-06 AID-05 CCO-00 PC-01
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 MCT-01 PA-01 SS-15 NSC-05
A-01 /061 W

-----104540 032359Z /62

R 031320Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8491

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER/ECJ-4/7-SAME

USDA/FAS/ASST ADMIN AND MGNT

DEPT OF INTERIOR/BUREC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINSHASA 2089

DEPT FOR A/SY/FO, AF/C, AF/EX, OC, AID/W (FOR MEILESKI)

AAG/SEC AND PC/W/AF REGION:

NAIROBI FOR RSS AND RTC

ACCRA FOR RCO

USIA FOR IOS (BARBER): FROM RSO KINSHASA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, CG

SUBJECT: CRIME LEVEL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN KINSHASA;
STATUS REPORT

REF: A) 77 KINSHASA 10351; B) 77 KINSHASA 10904

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1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE CRIME LEVEL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN KINSHASA HAVE IMPROVED SINCE LAST NOVEMBER (REFTELS). NO MILITARY-STYLE GANG ATTACKS AGAINST AMERICAN OR EUROPEAN RESIDENCES HAVE OCCURRED IN ABOUT FOUR MONTHS. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE CONTINUED DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN ZAIRE AND HISTORY OF SECURITY PROBLEMS HERE, WE ARE CONTINUING TO IMPROVE RESIDENTIAL AND APARTMENT DEFENSES. END SUMMARY

2. DURING PAST FOUR MONTHS, THE SECURITY SITUATION IN KINSHASA GENERALLY HAS RETURNED TO ITS PRE-OCTOBER 1977 LEVEL: THAT IS, A SITUATION NOT TOO DISSIMILAR FROM THAT OF OTHER LARGE CITIES IN THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD WHERE UNEMPLOYMENT AND HIGH PRICES HAVE REQUIRED RESIDENTS, BOTH INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN, TO EXERCISE GREAT CARE IN SAFEGUARDING THEIR BELONGINGS. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTED REOCCURRENCE SINCE EARLY NOVEMBER OF THE MILITARY-STYLE GANG ATTACKS AGAINST RESIDENCES WHICH LED TO THE MORALE PROBLEMS REPORTED REF A.

3. IN DECEMBER, THERE WERE SEVEN ATTEMPTS TO BREAK INTO MISSION RESIDENCES; ONLY ONE WAS SUCCESSFUL. IN JANUARY, OUT OF FIVE BREAK-IN ATTEMPTS, ONE HOUSE AND TWO APARTMENTS WERE ENTERED. ONE HOUSE AND ONE APARTMENT WERE ENTERED AND ROBBED IN FEBRUARY. CULPRITS WERE USUALLY INDIVIDUAL SNEAK THIEVES OR GROUPS OF THREE OR FOUR YOUTHS OPERATING EARLY IN THE MORNING. MONEY OR SMALL ARTICLES OF VALUE WERE STOLEN.

4. SINCE EARLY FEBRUARY, THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT INCREASE IN DAYLIGHT STREET ROBBERIES IN THE CITY CENTER. AT LEAST THREE AMERICANS AND A NUMBER OF EUROPEANS HAVE HAD PURSES, WATCHES OR NECKLACES SNATCHED. NONE OF THE STREET CRIMINALS OR SNEAK THIEVES MENTIONED ABOVE DISPLAYED WEAPONS.

5. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE REGULAR FOOT PATROLS OF ARMED POLICE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CITY CENTER, THERE ARE STILL NO POLICE GUARDS IN THE SUBURBS. THUS THE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO RESIDENTIAL AND APARTMENT DEFENSES. THE MAJORITY OF SEPARATE RESIDENCES HAVE ALARMS INSTALLED. RADIOS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO ALL SEPARATE RESIDENCES, AND AT LEAST ONE PER FLOOR TO APARTMENT DWELLERS TO SUPPLEMENT THE FAILING LOCAL TELEPHONE SYSTEM. METAL SHEATHING FOR INNER STRONG ROOM DOORS ARRIVED IN LATE JANUARY AND IS BEING PREPARED FOR INSTALLATION. THE OUTER PERIMETER DEFENSES OF APARTMENTS ARE NOW BEING SEALED OR ALARMED. NEW ARRIVALS ARE PROMPTLY BRIEFED ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND DEFENSES AGAINST THE CRIME THREAT. ALL PERSONNEL ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAINTAIN THEIR PHYSICAL SECURITY DEFENSES AND CLOSELY SUPERVISE THEIR GUARDS.

6. SINCE ZAIRE BECAME INDEPENDENT THERE HAVE BEEN MAJOR FLUCTUATIONS IN THE CRIME LEVEL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN KINSHASA. DURING LAST OCTOBER, WE WENT THROUGH ONE OF THE PERIODIC DIFFICULT PERIODS, BUT PROBLEMS THEN RETURNED TO A MORE NORMAL LEVEL. THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY MEANS THAT POST PERSONNEL MUST REMAIN ALERT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF EVENTUAL RECURRENCE OF DIFFICULTIES. FOR THE PRESENT, MORALE HAS IMPROVED NOTICEABLY, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE CESSATION OF MILITARY-STYLE GANG ATTACKS, PARTLY BECAUSE IMPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS HAVE REDUCED FEELINGS OF ISOLATION, AND ALSO
BECAUSE OF MEASURES DESCRIBED ABOVE WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY
THE MISSION AND BY INDIVIDUAL PERSONNEL TO IMPROVE
SITUATION.
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